[Paths and processes (art, technology)];

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The article by Bruno Latour "Technology is Society Made Durable", written from the field of Science, Technology and Society, drove me to consider some of his thoughts in the context of the creation-research processes which result in the production of a work of art and technology, heading into the context of stage production.

It is assumed that when we face a project to create some work, we think of it as a goal to meet, as a result. Generally, widespread publicity of the process undergone for the creation of the work is subordinated to the information on what the work deals with.

As it is well known, the works of art which make use of contemporary technologies have destabilized certain categories that looked like time-honored traditions, ranging over interactive and generative systems, artificial intelligence, virtual reality immersion, etc. But, what happens to the process of work creation?

"To eliminate the great divides between science/ society , technology / science, macro / micro, economics / research, human / non-human and rational / irrational is not to immerse ourselves in relativism and indifferentiation. Networks are not amorphous. The are highly differentiated, but their differences are fine, circumstantial, and small; thus requiring new tools and concepts. Instead of "sinking into relativism" it is relatively easy to float upon it." [1]

The purpose is not to fall into ambiguity, but to begin by establishing how and which of those traditional laws and categories are changed by the procedures of contemporary creation in art and technology, and those which are not. Whether technological matter and materiality destabilize traditional categories and their hierarchies –such as: actor / spectator, movement / code, process / work, etc.– or whether these dichotomies still remain today.

I wonder if the time has come when the artwork can to claim another place... the dynamic and erratic space of the process turned into artwork.

The procedures for work creation still seem deleted and missing. The Internet appears as a space for publicizing work just insomuch as this is the result of a hidden process; only what has been achieved is exhibited: a recording of the "show" in a room, in a theater or in a rehearsal; the poster, the advertising, the review and the datasheet.

The importance of the open processes of artistic creation lies in that they establish a new paradigm for the concept of learning and knowledge. Open publication not only "democratizes" the open access to information or tools allowing to gain a general or specific knowledge of a subject –within the controlled degrees of freedom provided by the Internet– but also facilitates the publicity of the creative processes by way of displaying everything which is omitted from the artwork as a result, even their failures.

It is not only about exposing records of teams reporting their ideas and achievements, but about revealing their paths, incorporating and publicizing the problems, successes, failures and hindrances that they face, pure instability. And in this sense, interpreting Latour's text, some kind of record or trace of the paths within the network, a network of

"actants", "human" and "non-human", putting forward these work processes as operations to be understood, as works in themselves.

"How do we define an actant? An actant is a list of answers put to trials - a list which, once stabilized, is hooked to a name of a thing and a substance. This substance acts as subject to all the predicates- in other words, it is made the origin of actions (Callon, 1991)." [2]

If each of the components, either human or not human, physical or digital, all have a role within a project; What variations, hindrances and alliances come up among their components within a path?

And then, in what way is this resulting -artwork- still affected by others –spectators / actors, spaces, materials, environments– to generate new paths or even new and unknown actants?

"The more variations that exist among the actors to which it is linked, the more polymorphous our actor is. The more it appears as being composed of different elements elements from version to version, the less stable its essence." [3]

Just like the error is understood as a strategy that allows knowing / creating / investigating, the instability comprises an area of affections, of structures composed of physical and digital actors who contaminate each other, losing and winning new forms and categories.

We could think of a computer code of cellular automata as a generative architecture which, based on a general structure, will produce random relations which will in turn generate their own relations. This process could be extrapolated to choreographic creation, in which we could generate a structure of instructions for each of the dancers to move and interact. Starting out from its variables (dancers), a structure of conditions will be generated (choreographic instructions of time and space, for example) in which random relations will be self-generated (improvisation).

If we think about these issues as an example, connecting the workings of a computer code to a possible process of choreographic creation, it may be the case that every human artistic process calls for another nonhuman one.

Clearly, any computer code will be created by a human, but the human will become part of this network of actants that will shape up the work, but not exclusively from its center, which may even disappear or relocate depending on the paths that occur within the process.

In this context, we are modifying the idea that a work of art is purely that which we are invited to see once it is finished, the result of what is unknown to others –either categorized as spectators or public– and we will integrate this organic and artificial factor, highly erratic, to finally constitute the process of technological investigation / creation.

In this sense, software, hardware, a human body would all be at the same level of involvement and therefore their horizontality would lead to establishing new categories and relations, driven by the contamination among them and their various paths within a spatiotemporal process.

This may be more clearly seen in the case of an artisan. Artisans are subjects who manufacture their own tools, works, artifacts, objects, etc. In this sense, a technological artisan has replaced any physical materiality (pigment, paper, metal, stone, etc.) with an electronic and digital materiality (resistors, wires, LEDs, numbers, symbols, etc.).

While the DIY movement is not a uniquely artistic community, this strategy of "do it yourself" has been integrated into the online processes of artistic creation and public disclosure in order to reclassify the concept of artisan and craftsmanship. In this context, we see artists entering the scientific field (computer science, electronics, biology, etc.), and scientist entering the arts field (aesthetics, thoughtfulness, project approach, etc.), who will solve their own proposals by themselves and thanks to all the possibilities given by the open and open-knowledge culture.

This concept of DIY perhaps puts more clearly forward the complexity of the creative processes around the art and technology axes, as human and nonhuman "actants", in a horizontal position that brings down hierarchies, with a closely connected art-and-technology matter and materiality. Physical affects digital and digital affects physical, along the same path, or in other words, at the very moment when both digital and physical, organic and inorganic meet.

Tackling a project from this concept gives us a momentary stability in our initial objectives, since this intention –or interpreting Latour ... this "declaration"– will provide only the starting point but not the arrival point, given that the path of a project can never be stable. What will happen in this process is unknown and unexpected, but registrable and mappable only while the path lasts, perhaps thereby undermining the idea that works are just deliverable products.

"When actors and points of view are aligned, then we enter a stable definition of society that looks like domination. When actors are unstable and the observers` points of view shift endlessly we are entering a highly unstable and negotiated situation in which domination is not yet exerted" [4]

The understanding of such procedures carried out by technological processes will possibly allow us to find new relations or breaches that are consistent with the creative processes traversed by technology, art, science and body. Otherwise, if we do not record such paths we risk going on creating interesting artworks by using technology; dramatic, poignant but which do not enable us to think about the problems at hand, let alone to try and solve them.

[1] Latour, B."La tecnología es la sociedad hecha para que dure". P. 140
[2] Ibid. P. 131
[3] Ibid. P. 131
[4] Ibid. P. 139

Reference

Latour, Bruno, “La tecnología es la sociedad hecha para que dure”. Sociología Simétrica. Ensayos sobre ciencia, tecnología y sociedad. M. Domenech y E.J. Tirado (comps.) Barcelona, Gedisa Editorial, 1998